

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

(PCT Rule 71.1)

To:

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Date of mailing
(day/month/year)

24.11.2005

Applicant's or agent's file reference
MDX,017-PCT

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/GB2005/050043

International filing date (day/month/year)
24.03.2005

Priority date (day/month/year)
30.03.2004

Applicant
MIDDLESEX SILVER CO. LIMITED et al.

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary report on patentability and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.
4. **REMINDER**

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary report on patentability. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

The applicant's attention is drawn to Article 33(5), which provides that the criteria of novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability described in Article 33(2) to (4) merely serve the purposes of international preliminary examination and that "any Contracting State may apply additional or different criteria for the purposes of deciding whether, in that State, the claimed inventions is patentable or not" (see also Article 27(5)). Such additional criteria may relate, for example, to exemptions from patentability, requirements for enabling disclosure, clarity and support for the claims.

Name and mailing address of the International
preliminary examining authority:



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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference MDX,017-PCT		FOR FURTHER ACTION		See Form PCT/PEA/416
International application No. PCT/GB2005/050043		International filing date (day/month/year) 24.03.2005	Priority date (day/month/year) 30.03.2004	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC C23F11/16, C11D3/00, C11D3/34, C11D11/00, C09G1/02				
Applicant MIDDLESEX SILVER CO. LIMITED et al.				
<p>1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p>3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:</p> <p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau a total of 4 sheets, as follows:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis of this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box.</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> (sent to the International Bureau only) a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s)) , containing a sequence listing and/or tables related thereto, in computer readable form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).</p>				
<p>4. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I Basis of the opinion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II Priority</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI Certain documents cited</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application</p>				
Date of submission of the demand 05.08.2005		Date of completion of this report 24.11.2005		
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465		Authorized Officer Mauger, J Telephone No. +49 89 2399-8447		



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**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON PATENTABILITY**

International application No.
PCT/GB2005/050043

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	1-35
	No: Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	1-35
	No: Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-35
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7):

see separate sheet

Box No. VI Certain documents cited

1. Certain published documents (Rule 70.10)

and / or

2. Non-written disclosures (Rule 70.9)

see separate sheet

Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

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Re Item V.

- 1) Reference is made to the following documents:
D1 : EP 0 492 487 A (DODUCO GMBH + CO DR. EUGEN DUERRWAECHTER) 1 July 1992 (1992-07-01)
D2 : US 3 503 883 A (IAN ALASTAIR MONCRIEFF FORD ET AL) 31 March 1970 (1970-03-31)
D3 : GB 1 070 383 A (J. GODDARD & SONS LIMITED) 1 June 1967 (1967-06-01)
D4 : GB 1 217 414 A (J. GODDARD & SONS LIMITED) 31 December 1970 (1970-12-31)
D5 : US 3 248 235 A (PRYOR DONALD M ET AL) 26 April 1966 (1966-04-26)
- 2) Document D1 (see column 3, line 18 -column 5 ,line 40, claims and examples) discloses an aqueous tarnish-inhibiting composition for silver which comprises an alkyl mercaptan (eg a C16 thiol) inhibitor and surface active components. The surface active components may comprise a mixture of a non-ionic and anionic surfactants. The pH of the composition is 1-10.
 - 2.1) Document D2 (see column 2, line 67 to column 3, line 52, claims and examples 2 and 7) discloses aqueous tarnish inhibiting compositions containing dialkyl disulfides. The compositions may contain detergents and be used as polishing paste or non-ionic emulsifiers and be used as dips.
 - 2.2) Document D3 (see claims and example 7) discloses protective polishing and cleaning compositions for silver. The compositions may contain alkyl thioglycollates and non-ionic surfactants.
 - 2.3) Document D4 (see page 1, line 85 to page 2, line 49, claims and examples) discloses a polishing and tarnish removing aqueous dip for silver containing an acid, thiourea, a non-ionic surfactant and an alkyl thiol.
 - 2.4) Document D5 (see column 3, lines 26-33, claims and examples) discloses an anti-tarnish composition for copper-containing surfaces. The compositions typically contained alkyl mercaptans, sodium chloride, a non-ionic surfactant, citric acid and

optionally an abrasive.

- 3) The present composition (see claims 1-34) is novel (Article 33(2) PCT) since the composition contains a specific combination of a non-ionic, anionic and zwitterionic surfactants. The use (claims 35) is novel since it employs this composition.
- 3.1) The problem solved by the present compositions is the provision of aqueous anti-tamishing compositions which are able to uniformly disperse the treatment agent and remain stable for long periods of time.

The application (see examples) contains indications that treatment compositions with the presently claimed combination of surfactants are particularly stable. Thus the problem is solved.

The cited prior art contains no suggestion that particular combinations of surfactants would solve this problem and thus an inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT) can be recognised. The use is inventive since the composition used is inventive.

Re Item VI

Certain documents cited

Certain published documents

Application No Patent No	Publication date (day/month/year)	Filing date (day/month/year)	Priority date (valid claim) (day/month/year)
WO-A-2004106567	09.12.2004	01.06.2004	03.06.2003
WO-A-200487996	14.10.2004	30.03.2004	31.03.2003

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

- 1) Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art

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International application No.

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disclosed in the documents D1-D5 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein.

- 2) The description is not in conformity with the claims as required by Rule 5.1(a)(iii) PCT.

IAP01 Rec'd PCT/PTO 28 SEP 2006

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CLAIMS

1. A water-based composition for treating a metal, comprising a treatment agent selected from an alkanethiol, alkyl thioglycollate, dialkyl sulfide or dialkyl disulfide, and in concentrations effective to solubilize said treatment agent:

a non-ionic relatively hydrophobic surfactant which is a compound of the formula



- wherein R_1 represents C_{10} - C_{24} alkyl or alkenyl, m is 0 or 1 and n is 1 or 2, or which is ethoxylated fatty acid monoglyceride;

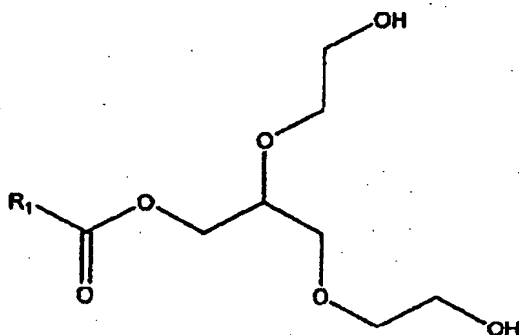
an anionic surfactant; and

a zwitterionic surfactant selected from betaine surfactants, imidazoline-based surfactants, aminoalkanoate surfactants and iminodialkanoate surfacts.

2. The composition of claim 1, wherein the treatment agent is hexadecyl or octadecyl mercaptan.

3. The composition of claim 1 or 2, wherein the non-ionic relatively hydrophobic surfactant comprises cocamide DEA.

4. The composition of claim 1, wherein the non-ionic relatively hydrophobic surfactant comprises an ethoxylated fatty acid monoglyceride of the formula:



wherein R_1 represents C_{10} - C_{24} alkyl or alkenyl.

5. The composition of claim 4, wherein the surfactant is a compound in which R1 represents C₁₂-C₁₈ alkyl or alkenyl.
- 5 6. The composition of claim 5, wherein the surfactant is glycereth-2-cocotate.
7. The composition of any preceding claim, comprising 0.5-10 wt % of the relatively hydrophobic surfactant.
- 10 8. The composition of any preceding claim, comprising 1-6 wt % of the relatively hydrophobic surfactant.
9. The composition of any preceding claim, comprising 2-5 wt % of the relatively hydrophobic surfactant.
- 15 10. The composition of any preceding claim, further comprising a polyol.
11. The composition of claim 10, comprising 0.5-10 wt % of the polyol.
- 20 12. The composition of claim 10, comprising 1-8 wt % of the polyol.
13. The composition of claim 10, comprising 1-5 wt % of the polyol.
14. The composition of any of claims 10-13, wherein the polyol is glycerol.
- 25 15. The composition of any preceding claim, wherein the anionic surfactant is of the formula RO-(CH₂CH₂)_nSO₃M wherein R represents C₁₀-C₁₈ alkyl, n is 2-6 and M represents a monovalent cation.
- 30 16. The composition of claim 15, wherein the anionic surfactant is a monovalent cation salt of laureth sulfate.

17. The composition of any preceding claim, wherein the amount of anionic surfactant (solids) is 0.1-15 wt%.

18. The composition of claim 17, wherein the amount of anionic surfactant (solids) is 0.3-10 wt%.

19. The composition of claim 17, wherein the amount of anionic surfactant (solids) is 0.5-1 wt%.

20. The composition of any preceding claim, wherein the zwitterionic surfactant is cocamidopropyl betaine.

21. The composition of any preceding claim, wherein the zwitterionic surfactant is present in an amount of 0.3-6 wt%

22. The composition of claim 21, wherein the zwitterionic surfactant is present in an amount of 0.6-3 wt%.

23. The composition of claim 21, wherein the zwitterionic surfactant is present in an amount of 0.9-1.5 wt%.

24. A composition according to any preceding claim comprising treatment agent in an amount of 0.1-5 wt%

25. A composition according to claim 24 comprising treatment agent in an amount of 0.5-2 wt%.

26. A composition according to claim 24, comprising treatment agent in an amount of about 1 wt%.

27. A composition according to any preceding claim, further comprising a salt of a strong base with a strong mineral acid.

28. The composition of claim 27, wherein the salt is sodium chloride or sodium sulfate.
- 5 29. The composition of claim 27 or 28, comprising 0.1-3 wt% of said salt.
30. The composition of claim 27 or 28, comprising 0.5-2 wt% of said salt.
31. The composition of claim 27 or 28, comprising about 1 wt% of said salt.
- 10 32. The composition of any preceding claim, which is a polishing dip and further comprises an acid and a thiourea.
33. The composition of any of claims 1-31, which is a cream or paste polish
15 further comprising a solid polishing medium.
34. The composition of claim 33, wherein the polishing medium is precipitated chalk, infusorial earth, silica or γ -alumina.
- 20 35. Use of the composition of any of claims 1-34 for the treatment of a silver-copper alloy, a silver-copper-germanium alloy, copper, brass or nickel.